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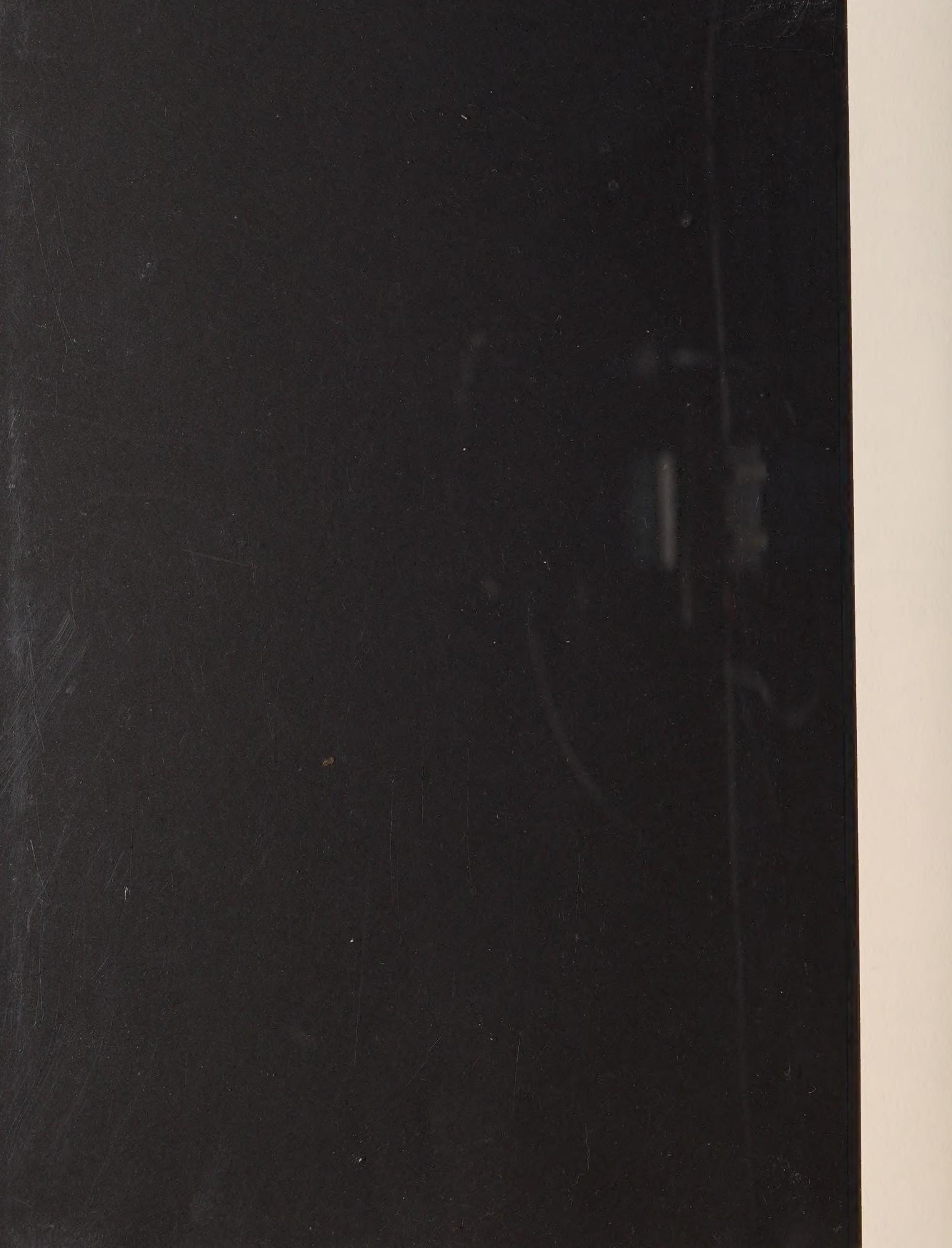
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The Canadian Identity

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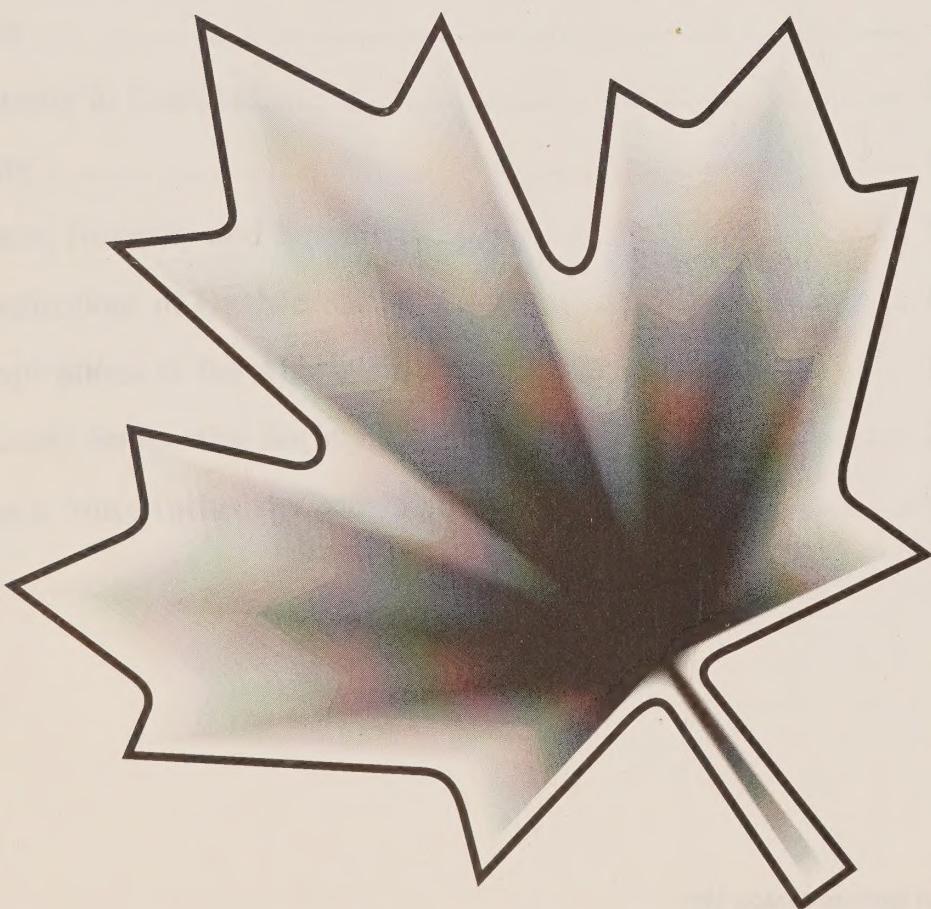
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SHARED VALUES

The Canadian Identity





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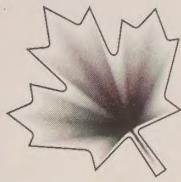
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Canadians Have Spoken

On the northern half of the continent, on the second-largest land mass in the world, with a tapestry of cultures as varied as the world, we have built a society which cares, a society which dares, a society which is both just *and* free, peaceful *and* prosperous.

*Joe Clark, Calgary,
August 18, 1991*

Over the past years Canadians have had a number of opportunities to express their feelings about their country, its evolution and their place in it. The Government's proposals have been developed after listening to the broadest possible range of Canadian views.

We have read and studied the reports of the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future (the "Spicer Commission") and of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the Process for Amending the Constitution of Canada (the "Beaudoin-Edwards Committee"). We have also studied reports of various provincial undertakings, such as the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, the Select Committee on Ontario in Confederation, and the British Columbia discussion papers.

The Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons will continue the dialogue with Canadians on the proposals for a renewed Canada.

The Government has heard Canadians' deep caring for this country, and has also heard frustration and impatience. Disagreement is natural and healthy among people who respect one another and are committed to greater understanding. But, clearly, many Canadians feel that they are not respected, that they are not understood, that they are not wanted. The disagreements and feelings are real and must be addressed.

Yet what we have heard also makes us cautiously optimistic because, in the midst of these disagreements, there is much that binds us together.

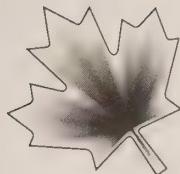
Canada is a country that believes in freedom, dignity and respect, equality and fair treatment, and opportunity to participate. It is a country that cares for the disadvantaged at home and elsewhere, a country that prefers peaceful solutions to disputes. Canada is a country that, for all its diversity, has shared values. Canada is known all over the world for the principles it espouses. Although we may sometimes lose sight of this commonality, essential values are shared by Canadians from coast to coast to coast, including aboriginal Canadians, Canadians in Quebec's distinct society, and Canadians who have come to our country from other shores and lands. All have contributed, and continue to contribute, to these values; they are based on the teaching and learning and experience of the peoples who make up

Canada. One of the core values is respect for others, an understanding that there are many ways to pursue the fundamentals of life.

This document attempts to discern and set out the fundamental values and realities of Canada. The Government of Canada believes the Constitution must be a framework that reflects our values, our aspirations and the best of what Canadians really are. These fundamentals not only might appear in the Constitution, but must underlie our whole approach to renewal. We want to know

Canadians' views on these concepts; it is imperative that Canadians themselves fashion a statement of who they are.

Many Canadians have trepidation about constitutional renewal. Fearing there may be losers as well as winners, they are worried about being left out. The Government of Canada is confident that all Canadians can be involved in this exercise if we identify our values, ensure that they are reflected in the country's highest law, and learn to understand and respect each other more.



Freedom, Democracy and the Rule of Law

The visionaries and pragmatists who created Canada set in motion a unique experiment that the world has been watching for 124 years. Some would argue that this vast country was brought together because of economic interests; others would say that it was created because of threats to our security. One thing is clear: those who created, joined and continued to create Canada shared a fundamental commitment to freedom, representative democracy and the rule of law. This commitment not only laid the basis of Confederation, but set the direction for its evolution.

For newcomers to this country, Canada has meant personal freedom, freedom from restrictions and hunger. The early explorers and pioneers were escaping old oppressions and searching for new possibilities. Here, instead of traditions and old-world structures and ways, they were confronted mainly by hostile climate and geography. But, in Canada, there was room for everyone to breathe, to have their own vital space unencumbered by authority. With the help of the aboriginal peoples and their deep understanding of the land, air and waters, unmanageable frontiers were conquered, the country settled.

Canada has conferred great benefits on all of its citizens, but it was not created without cost to the aboriginal peoples. Canada has not always been all-inclusive. We are only now beginning to acknowledge that many have been left out of the great benefits of our country's freedoms.

Yet, despite the great failures in the treatment of some of its people, Canada remains deeply symbolic of freedom in its broadest sense. It is a country to which many long to come for the same reasons the settlers and pioneers came.

In Canada, we are guided by the fundamental principle, primarily guaranteed by democracy and the independence of the courts, that individuals are limited in the exercise of their freedom only to the extent that such exercise limits the freedom of others.

Canada is a peaceable society. It is a society based on civility, built not out of revolution, but accommodation. It evolved through orderly progress. Canada became a country in which the relations between government and the people would be governed by the rule of law and a constitution. The frontiers would be harnessed largely by the rule of law, not the gun. The law would be interpreted and applied by an independent judiciary. The rule of law and respect for

authority were the Canadian way of conquering an often adverse and hostile environment. Canadians understand the need for strong government while understanding its limitations.

From the beginning, it was to be the Canadian people who chose their government through the exercise of the right to vote. Canada was to be governed by “rep by pop” and majority rule. Canada’s form of responsible government was shaped by French- and English-speaking Canadians, including Louis-Joseph Papineau and William Lyon Mackenzie. Over time, majority rule became universal. In 1982, the right to vote was constitutionally entrenched. The right to vote and our democratic institutions — the House of Commons and the legislative assemblies — are vitally important symbols and manifestations of Canadian freedom.

We are hearing individuals and groups who feel excluded and want to play their part. Canadians want opportunities to be

heard; they want greater voice individually and collectively. Canadians are demanding that both their democratic institutions and the laws made by them become more responsive to them, more representative of them. They seek empowerment.

As we witness with admiration the struggles for democracy in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, we can be very grateful for what we have and respectful of those Canadians who have had to fight to achieve equality, human rights, and freedom. Even in Canada, for many, democratic rights were achieved only with great difficulty. Women, aboriginal peoples and many ethnic groups had to strive long and hard for the right to vote and for full participation in our democratic institutions. This evolution continues. We must all remain committed to improving our democracy and to empowering Canadians.



Federalism

Federalism, as a principle of political organization, is characterized by the flexibility of the arrangements and structures it makes possible.

From the Bélanger-Campeau Report of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Quebec, March 1991

Whatever their personal preferences, Canada's architects understood that federalism was the only option for nation-building. It provided a framework for bringing together the diverse parts we now think of as Canada, in a way that allowed government to be responsive to distinct local needs and circumstances. Federalism, shaped by 124 years of living together in Canada, has nurtured our sense of community, our diversity within unity. Canada's form of federalism allowed for special consideration of language and culture through the division of powers and special constitutional protections.

No traveller to Canada fails to be struck by our great size and by the diversity of our climate, geography and peoples. Canada is islands in three oceans, mountains, prairies, rich farmlands and orchards, fishing villages, wilderness and tundra, resource and industrial towns, and cosmopolitan cities. How could the architects of Canada have imagined any form of political organization other than

federalism? The provinces, territories and regions of Canada are all different. Federalism respects this diversity. Like our rich and varied country, federalism itself can be diverse and conducive to many ways of life.

Some Canadians — and not only Quebecers — want more powers exercised at the provincial or local level, where, as they perceive it, local needs and conditions could be better addressed. Canadians also want the federal government to maintain its powers, to remain strong and to ensure the continued, efficient functioning of the economic union and national social programs.

Federalism is one reflection in the Constitution of the fact that national majorities should not determine all issues, that it is more democratic to allow different communities to determine various issues. As well, federalism not only gives room to regions or provinces to make decisions in their own areas but also permits directly elected representatives from the provinces and territories to be part of national policy-making.

Federalism has the flexibility to achieve a balance. It has the flexibility to accommodate local needs and conditions and communities and to adapt to the change now needed by a number of our component parts. Federalism is the form of democracy that is best able to meet the aspirations of those that make up this vast and varied country.



Freedoms and Human Rights

Freedom has a rich and varied meaning. Many people have come to Canada seeking freedom of some form or another: for some, it was freedom from persecution, prejudice or domination; for others, freedom to choose, to seek and pursue better economic prospects. Being part of the community of Canada endows individuals with fundamental human rights and freedoms that are shared by all Canadians. Freedom and fulfilment of the individual are limited only by the need for all individuals to have the same freedom and all that goes with it. In other nations, people risk their lives and sacrifice their material security for the very freedoms that, in our nation, previous generations have already guaranteed for us.

Freedom can have countless meanings, depending on the circumstances. No one can claim to know them all. For aboriginal peoples in Canada, the concept of freedom has been tied, since time immemorial, to their special relationship with the land, air and waters and to their sense of spirituality. In Canada, we have enshrined some meanings of freedom in our conventions, laws and Constitution as fundamental freedoms and rights. Some are not new, dating from as long ago as the Magna Carta of 1215. Still others are to be found in federal statutes, particularly the *Canadian Bill of Rights* (1960) and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1977), or in provincial statutes such as Saskatchewan's

Bill of Rights (1947), Ontario's *Human Rights Code* (1962), Alberta's *Bill of Rights* (1972), and Quebec's *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* (1975).

In 1982, the protection of Canadians' fundamental rights and freedoms was taken a significant step further by their entrenchment in the Constitution as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Since then, our fundamental freedoms are no longer to be found only in conventions and laws that can be changed by Parliament or provincial legislatures, but are now found in the Constitution itself. The Charter ensures that laws restrict freedom as little as is reasonably possible. The Charter also includes a notwithstanding clause that allows Parliament and legislatures to override certain Charter rights.

Our understanding of freedom is modified by a sense of justice, caring and compassion for others. It also involves a sense of responsibility to the greater community and to other individuals. In Canada, particularly in Canada, we have understood that freedom comes with corresponding responsibilities to each other, to our family, to our neighbours, to our communities, to our country, and to the broader world.

Constitutional change must respect rights and freedoms already entrenched in the Constitution and build a foundation for their greater realization. Constitutional change must also encourage understanding both of the necessity that the exercise of rights and freedoms respect the rights and

freedoms of others and of the corresponding responsibilities that rights and freedoms carry with them.



Equality

It must be recognized at once, however, that every difference in treatment between individuals under the law will not necessarily result in inequality and, as well, that identical treatment may frequently produce inequality.

*Mr. Justice William McIntyre,
the Supreme Court of Canada,
in the Andrews case*

The concept of equality is a powerful driving force in Canada. Canadians understand its fundamental importance to the individual and to her or his full participation in society. It involves notions of relative equality of prospects and a sense of respected identity. It aims to respect the inherent worth and dignity of each individual.

Canada is a diverse society, and equality is vital to our federal democracy and to our concept of freedom for the individual. We recognize that respect for the individual's community in Canada is essential to the individual's sense of being equal. Individuals need to know that, like their families, their communities are equally respected, that no one community is better than another. Our individual rights are closely connected with our place in our communities.

The notion of equality as it has developed in Canada takes into account the differences amongst individuals, groups and even provinces, in terms of their needs and conditions, to ensure that all derive the same net

benefit of the law as much as possible. This notion derives from our sense of caring for others. Moreover, our concept of Canada recognizes that an unbending rule of same or identical treatment in the name of a rigid notion of formal equality may lead to inequality.

The constitutional basis for individual equality in Canada is section 15 of the Charter. But, in fact, section 15 complements previously existing federal and provincial legislation aimed at protecting the individual against discriminatory action. Some of this legislation is mentioned previously under "Freedom and Human Rights."

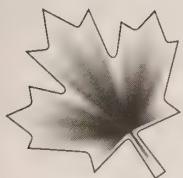
The purpose of equality rights, our Supreme Court has said, is to remedy or prevent discrimination against groups suffering social, political or legal disadvantage. Many groups in our society have faced, and continue to face, formidable barriers to being included in our society as themselves, for what they are. Women, the physically challenged, our senior citizens, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, official-language minority groups, and others face daily challenges not always understood by the rest of society. Equality aims at eliminating the barriers of discrimination such as stereotyping, historical disadvantage, and vulnerability to political and social prejudice.

The goal of equality is not to achieve identical treatment; rather, by ridding laws of discriminatory distinctions based on irrele-

vant personal characteristics, equality rights aim at equality of opportunity for disadvantaged individuals or groups. In fact, the Supreme Court has said that the *accommodation of differences is the essence of true equality*. Moreover, identical treatment may frequently produce serious inequity. Section 15 itself acknowledges that programs aimed at improving the conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups are not precluded by equality rights.

Section 15 complements other constitutional provisions for ensuring that all components of the Canadian community feel fully part of it. For English- and Frenchlanguage communities throughout Canada, sections 16 to 22 of the Charter set out the provisions ensuring the equality of English and French as Canada's official languages. The parents of children belonging to official-language minority communities within the provinces are guaranteed the right to have their children

educated in their first language. Women and men are given particular attention both in section 28 of the Charter and in subsection 35(4) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. These sections are intended to protect the equality of the sexes in the application of the Charter's rights and freedoms and in the guarantee of aboriginal and treaty rights. Key for aboriginal peoples is the protection in section 25 of the Charter that ensures that aboriginal, treaty and other rights and freedoms pertaining to the aboriginal peoples will not be undermined by the application of the Charter. Section 27, with its protection of our multicultural heritage, and other provisions in the Charter are fundamental for a multicultural society. These provisions, along with other freedoms, attest to the importance of individuals, as they are, as they live, in community. Our Constitution recognizes that individuals live in, and derive their identity from, their communities.



Community in Canada

Save the *community* and you will save the individual.

W.W. Campbell, 1913

“Community” in Canada has many meanings. We begin, of course, with the community of Canada. It is the larger community or society to which we all belong. From there we identify with our particular regions and maintain strong affinities with our respective provinces, territories, and societies, including Quebec’s distinct society. We are members of our towns or cities, neighbourhoods and families. Many of us are also members of religious, cultural or linguistic communities whose daily support and shared traditions give special meaning to our lives.

Canadians are strongly committed to their communities and these communities in turn are important to the make-up and nature of Canada. In fact, the individual’s communities at their various levels give substantive meaning to the values of freedom and equality; the individual needs some form of community for support and growth. Some of those communities may in turn need specific legal protections against vulnerability to erosion by the force of larger entities and influences.

In the Canadian experience, it has not been enough to protect individual rights. Here, the Constitution and ordinary laws protect not only universal individual rights, but also rights accorded to individuals as mem-

bers of certain communities. This accommodation of both types of rights makes our Constitution unique and reflects the Canadian value of equality that accommodates difference.

Our constitutional recognition of the need to give protections to individuals as members of certain communities is perhaps Canada’s unique contribution to western liberalism. In Canada, freedom, equality and community go hand in hand to ensure the individual’s full sense of self-worth.

In terms of the underlying interests they represent, individual rights as such and rights accruing to the individual as a member of a community are very similar. Individual rights help to protect persons against unreasonable state incursions into their lives; rights of individuals as members of specific communities help communities to be protected from the pervasive influence of the majority culture, religion and language through the state. Ultimately both community and individual rights aim of enhancing the dignity and the social worth of the individual for the betterment of the whole society. Our Constitution recognizes that to conserve the community is to help empower the individual.

Our Canadian experience has shown that the notion of equality that accommodates difference applies with the same force to questions of cultural, linguistic and community vulnerability, such as Quebec’s desire for a constitutional acknowledgement

of its distinctiveness and the aboriginal peoples' desire for constitutional recognition of their right to self-government.

Official-language minority groups within the provinces constitute important communities in Canada. True equality must take into account the needs of these communities, which represent an integral part of Canada's diversity. In the same way, official bilingualism — that is, constitutional recog-

nition of the equality of status of English and French within federal institutions — is a crucial aspect of our identity and helps these minority communities flourish.

It is important that constitutional change reflect our evolving understanding that communities, with their great diversity in Canada, are basic to realizing individual rights.



Diversity

Canada is a rainbow of people and places.

*A fourth-grade student,
participating in
the Citizens' Forum on
Canada's Future*

We appreciate, however, the concern of many Canadians that there are too many "hyphenated Canadians." Many would argue that the hyphen must go, that we should emphasize a pan-Canadian identity. Why can't we all simply be Canadians? According to this view, the hyphen is symbolic of the difficulty we have in defining what it is to be Canadian.

This view may not fully appreciate the vital role *community* plays in the lives of individuals. It assumes that membership in smaller communities prevents individuals from participating fully in the larger community of Canada; it may also reflect the reality that those Canadians who can take for granted the survival of their linguistic/cultural community have greater difficulty in understanding the needs of more vulnerable communities.

Canadian diversity has existed from the earliest days of our history. The aboriginal peoples, themselves extremely diverse, form a fundamental aspect of our society. Our Constitution has always recognized the importance of English and French as Canada's languages, a matter of diversity that makes Canada unique and strong.

Canada has welcomed within its boundaries peoples from many lands and has permitted and encouraged community growth at all levels. We have acknowledged in the Constitution the fact that we are a multicultural society and that this heritage deserves respect. We accept that individuals value membership in particular aboriginal, cultural, ethnic or linguistic communities while participating in the larger Canadian community. Members of our society do not have to give up their individual sense of their ethnic identity or their regional, provincial, or local affinities as the price of being part of Canada. Why? Canada is understanding that community nurtures the individual and that, if the individual is deprived of community at its various levels, she or he can never feel equal.

Accommodating diversity does not undermine our unity, but rather promotes it. Diversity has become part of the shared Canadian concept of equality that seeks to curb racism and intolerance of difference, so that as individuals and members of our communities we can all participate fully in our society and strengthen what we have in common.

Canada is one of the world's oldest constitutional democracies, possessing a rich history of civility and accommodation. Yet, in another sense, Canada is a young country, still emerging. Strong values of a pan-Canadian citizenship are evolving, and this pro-

cess will continue. And we must continue to let all groups participate fully in this process and in shaping our future.

In constitutional change, it is vital that our notion of equality and fairness encompass diversity and that our diversity be seen as fundamental to the nature of Canada.



Provinces, Diversity and Equality

Given that provinces have entered confederation on different terms and operate under different provisions, we believe that special arrangements in provinces based on special needs *are a fundamental principle of Canadian federalism*. This principle would apply where needed to all provinces.

A recommendation of the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future

Canadians told the Spicer Commission that they want the equality of the provinces respected. But, as the Commission itself stated, equality of the provinces does not necessarily mean everything has to be the same. Constitutional provisions that speak to the unique needs and circumstances of individual provinces have always been compatible with Canadian federalism. As with the principle of equality for individuals, the notion of equality of the provinces does not invariably mean same or identical treatment. As with individuals, distinct provisions for the provinces can have their source in historical disadvantage or political, economic or social vulnerability or need. Different treatment for provinces is justified where it enhances true equality for individuals.

Under the Constitution, the provinces are treated identically in many respects. The most obvious manifestation of this identical treatment is the listing of provincial legislative powers in sections 92 and other sections of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, which apply to all provinces in the same way. Other provisions of the Constitution also apply identically to all provinces. However, identical treatment of the provinces is not an unbending rule of Canada's constitutional experience.

In fact, particular historical, geographic, economic and social circumstances of individual provinces have often dictated unique constitutional treatment. The Constitution is replete with examples. Constitutional official-language requirements in courts or legislatures apply only to Quebec, Manitoba and New Brunswick. Denominational school rights vary greatly from province to province. Most significantly, the provinces that entered Confederation after 1867 (i.e., those other than Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) all have separate terms of union. These variations from province to province are consistent with the principle of individual equality. Unique needs and circumstances may require unique treatment appropriate to those needs and circumstances.



The Aspirations of Quebec

Canadians must not allow themselves to forget that Quebec is the institutional shelter for six million of their fellow citizens whose first language is French, who perceive their government and its powers as primary defences against the assimilationist pull of the surrounding 250 million English-speaking North Americans. Our recognition of the distinctiveness is hollow unless we show ourselves willing to do what is necessary to maintain that distinctiveness.

From the report of the Special Joint Committee on the Process For Amending the Constitution of Canada, Ottawa, June 1991

Quebecers share the core fundamental values of other Canadians. Since 1975, Quebec has had a *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* very similar to the Canadian Charter. Its interculturalism policies recognize the diverse nature of Quebec society. But it is not like the other provinces in terms of its linguistic character. Quebec is the only province within Canada that is home to a majority French-speaking population, within a primarily English-speaking country and continent. In a country where all provinces are different, Quebec is doubly distinct.

The government of Quebec has the responsibility for protecting its majority French language and culture. That the language and culture of the majority in Quebec is a language and culture of a minority within Canada as a whole — and, for that matter, on the entire continent — is clearly a unique provincial circumstance. Recognizing that Quebec has a special responsibility for protecting the French language and culture (and other unique aspects of Quebec, such as those reflected in its civil law) points to the need, in conformity with the Canadian notion of equality, to accommodate Quebec's unique and exceptional circumstances through special constitutional provisions. The recognition of Quebec's distinct society is not privileged or preferential treatment; it is a recognition of a different and unique reality within an overall context of shared Canadian rights, values and respect for diversity and within the context of the importance to Canada as a whole of minority official language groups.

Why is it necessary to reflect the reality of Quebec's distinct society in the Constitution? It is a matter of respect, and of confirmation that Canada as a whole stands behind Quebec's distinctiveness. Quebec's distinctiveness strengthens Canada and Canada strengthens Quebec's ability to preserve and promote its distinct society.

The continued survival and flourishing of the French language in Quebec and the distinctive culture that it has nurtured should

not be taken for granted by those Canadians who can take for granted the survival of their own linguistic community. In this context, the constitutional recognition of Quebec's distinct society gives Quebecers as individuals nothing more than other Canadians have, but rather provides equality.

A renewed Canada must embrace the distinct nature of Quebec's society within the Constitution.



The Aspirations of the Aboriginal Peoples

We must make peace with our ancient population and ensure that its interests are protected, not ours. My vision of Canada is that of a nation that is tolerant, that includes Quebec and natives, where power is shared, not fought over.

A participant in the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future

As discussed above, respect for certain communities within the Canadian constitutional framework does not run afoul of the notion of equality, but rather is in keeping with the Canadian notion of true equality, namely the accommodation of special circumstances. This relation is particularly true of the aboriginal peoples and their place in Canada in the past and present.

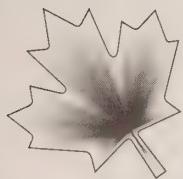
They are the First Nations, the first organized societies to exist in North America. Their political and social structures, their rich cultures, their history and their languages have been challenged. Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples are seeking a new relationship within Canada, with government and with their fellow Canadians, based on their need to have their communities form the decision-making units for matters directly affecting them.

The treatment of the aboriginal peoples within Canada represents one of the great failures in our caring for one another. Theirs is a history of inequity and abuse within Canada. Canadians are increasingly sensitive to this history. In the past, the aboriginal peoples were alternately excluded from the mainstream and forced to assimilate. Canada's policies concerning the reserve system were often marked by this ambivalence: alternation between attempts to keep Indian peoples within the reserves while denying them a resource base and attempts to destroy the reserves and force the residents into the Canadian mainstream. We must remember that a country and a political structure in the northern half of this continent were imposed on the aboriginal peoples — not the reverse. Their history is part of Canada's history. The history, languages and cultures of all the aboriginal peoples are an important part of Canadian identity in ways that we are only now beginning to understand.

This process of defining the relationship of the aboriginal peoples with the rest of Canada has already begun, but it is far from over. In 1982, the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada were recognized and affirmed in the Constitution. As the first amendment to our

patriated Constitution two years later, rights arising by way of land claim settlements were further recognized in the Constitution. In the same amendment, the equality of aboriginal women and men was fully guaranteed.

This process must and will be pursued in the current round of reform and renewal. Constitutional change must reflect the particular rights and place of aboriginal peoples in Canadian society.



A Mutually Supportive Society

Many believed that a common thread among Canadians was a concern for the well-being of others. This concern and respect was particularly evident in the value placed on our country's social programs. The health-care, education and social welfare services were viewed by many witnesses as significant achievements of which Canadians are proud.

From the Interim Report of the Select Committee on Ontario in Confederation, March 1991

Canada has come a long way since its founding in 1867, and Canadians do not want national traditions and institutions to be undermined in the current round of reform. This reluctance is clear in the way Canadians feel about their social programs.

As Canadians, we benefit from a number of social programs that reflect our understanding of community, equality and freedom nuanced by compassion. These programs are implemented in a way that permits governments to take into account changing times and needs. They are part of Canada's social safety net and are associated with our standard of living. We want to ensure that all individuals receive the assistance, care or service that they require. We also want particular groups that may have been overlooked, such as the disabled or

children, to henceforth get the help they need. Our social safety net helps to define the notions of equality, community and responsibility as they are developing in Canada. We believe that all Canadians are entitled, as Canadians, to basic services, regardless of where they live in Canada.

Canadians generally want to ensure that their fellow Canadians and their families are cared for when they fall on hard times. They do not want anything to diminish the fundamental principles of universality, accessibility and public funding that underlie Canada's health-care system. Unemployment insurance, family allowance and social welfare programs are supported by Canadians, even if they lament certain abuses. They also want the senior members of our society to have pension protection. Canadians share the goal of ensuring an educated society through publicly funded primary and secondary education.

In Canada, we have also entrenched in our Constitution rights aimed at ensuring the functioning of an economic union within the country and the economic prosperity of individuals. These rights cover the free movement of citizens in and out of Canada and from province to province. As Canadians, we are part of the whole country, regardless of our regional, provincial and community affinities. We can benefit from all parts of the country, and the fruits of our labour are treated the same everywhere. To be Canadian is to have access to every part of Canada. We

value economic growth and a prosperous economy, providing a strong base for our values to flourish. We also value the right to property both for our own enjoyment and for the economic growth and prosperity that property fosters.

We have entrenched commitments to promote equalization and diminish regional disparities. These commitments aim at promoting equal opportunities toward the well-being of Canadians, at furthering economic development to reduce disparity in opportunities, and at providing essential public service of reasonable quality to all Canadians.

By insisting on the importance of these programs and values, Canadians have said that caring for, and sharing with, fellow members of our society are important. To understand, and empathize with, those who are less fortunate is an essential part of being Canadian.

Canadians' commitment to community and caring for each other carries through to their growing concern for the land, air and waters and for the welfare of other nations. Canadians are increasingly aware of the delicate balance between humanity and the environment and of the importance of ensuring that development is sustainable development. Our aboriginal fellow citizens have always known this. The power, magnificence, fecundity and expansiveness of our land and waters remind us of the great potential of the country and of the responsibility we have toward it. We hold the environment in trust for each other and for our future generations.

How Canadians see themselves at home and the values they hold dear are also revealed in our role abroad. Canada is a leader in shaping democratic and other world values. Canada holds an international role internationally as peacemaker, a moderating and conciliatory influence in international affairs. Canada is a recognized worldwide as a country that can be called on to keep the peace amongst warring factions. We believe in peaceful co-existence. Canada, at home and abroad, is committed to the resolution of differences through dialogue, negotiation, accommodation and compromise.

Constitutional change must reflect many of the values of our mutually supportive society. Canadians recognize the importance of support, tolerance and respect for each other. Canadians are committed to the well-being of all Canadians in whatever part of Canada they live. Canadians believe that an essential feature of the Canadian union is the free flow of people, goods, services and capital across provincial and territorial borders to the common benefit of all. Canadians value the right to property. Canadians are committed to protecting their land and waters so that all may share the benefit of a clean and safe environment. Canadians see themselves as a peaceable society committed to the resolution of differences through dialogue, negotiation and accommodation.



Making a More Inclusive Canada

Underlying our shared values is a spirit of mutual respect and mutual benefit. Canada aims to be a self-confident society whose members can be proud Canadians while enjoying their cultural, ethnic and linguistic origins. Canada has recognized two official languages for its citizens. Canada has entrenched both individual rights and rights accruing to individuals as members of certain groups. Canada aims to be respectful and reasonable. It is not easy to accommodate diversity and the enormous variations in culture, language and ethnicity found in our country, but it is important to develop greater understanding of, greater sensitivity to, the needs for individual development within different levels of community.

However, we must frankly and openly recognize that Canadian society has experienced gaps in its generosity and tolerance. Respect for those who do not fit into the cultural, social, linguistic or economic mainstream has not always come without struggle by individuals and communities wanting to maintain their roots. Many political and legal battles have been waged by threatened communities, such as aboriginal peoples, women's groups, minority language communities and other disadvantaged groups, both to gain protections that others take for

granted and to realize those they have already achieved in law. We must be frank in acknowledging that, in many communities and for many individuals, disadvantage and a sense of exclusion continue.

The federal proposals are intended to start the dialogue among Canadians for the process of creating a better Canada, a Canada where the values that Canadians share can be enhanced and where the people can more readily take control of what is important to them. By empowering individuals and communities we do not threaten Canada. Rather, we allow the continued evolution of an all-inclusive Canada. Our Constitution must reflect what we aspire to as a country; our Constitution must continue to be a living tree.

In the process of constitutional reform and renewal, we must remain faithful to our shared core values. We can and should expect difficult compromises and concessions; but our shared core values must not, and will not, be bartered or bargained away in the process.

Being Canadian means having not only the right and responsibility to shape the future of the country, but also the attendant feelings of ownership and belonging. Our intention must be to build a more inclusive Canada — one in which all Canadians feel at

home. We will be able to achieve a truly pan-Canadian identity only when all individuals feel that they are fully part of the whole nation, when they feel included. We are striving to make all Canadians confident about their power to shape Canada's future. By empowering our country's parts, we are empowering the whole. Ours will be not so much a nation of diversity as a nation built out of diversity, a nation lasting, enduring, belonging to all of Canada's inhabitants.

We can all lift each other up.

*From a prayer by Peter O'Chiese,
an elder of the Assembly of
First Nations, quoted in a speech
by
Joe Clark, Calgary, August 1991*

We have attempted here to set out the values that we believe Canadians share and respect. Our values as they have evolved in Canada underlie our approach to reform and renewal in this country. No one of these values is unique to Canada, but they have been shaped by centuries of interaction among Canadians — aborigines and others — to produce a uniquely Canadian way of life. We believe that Canadians should take a particular interest in sharing their views on Canadian identity, values and diversity with the Parliamentary Committee. It is important for the world and for us that we preserve and enhance these values in Canada now and for future generations.

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